

Remarks

Claims 1-14, 16, and 17 remain in the application. Applicant submits no new matter is being introduced by way of this Reply. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections and objections. Reconsideration of this application in light of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections

The Office Action rejections Claims 1-14, 16, and 17 based on the following grounds:

Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Northcutt (U.S. Publication 2004/0176114 A1, Northcutt hereinafter) in view of Natsuno (U.S. Publication 2003/0092455 A1, Natsuno hereinafter).

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Northcutt in view of Natsuno and further in view of MPEP 2144.03.

Claims 8-14 and 16-17 are rejected for the same arguments/reasons that were made in the rejection of claims 1-7 above.

Applicant respectfully submits that the Northcutt reference is not prior art. Applicant is submitting a certified copy of the Finnish patent application 20022176 per the Examiner's request on pages 5-6, paragraph 6 of the Office Action mailed on January 7, 2009,. Applicant believes the present application is a national stage entry of PCT application PCT/FI03/00939, filed on December 10, 2003. The PCT application claims priority to Finnish patent application No. 20022176, filed on December 11, 2002. Accordingly, the priority date of the present application is December 11, 2002.

Northcutt was filed as a US utility application (Serial Number 10/248,982) on March 6, 2003. The USPTO record shows that it does not claim priority to any other applications. Therefore, the earliest date of Northcutt is March 6, 2003 and this date is later than the above earliest priority date of the present application. Northcutt cannot be used as a prior art reference.

For at least the reasons stated above, Applicant respectfully requests the rejection of Claims 1-14, 16, and 17 under 35 USC §103(a) is improper and should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

It is clear from the foregoing that the claims are in condition for allowance. An early formal notice of allowance of claims is respectfully requested. Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned with any questions.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment that may be due in this matter to Deposit Account Number 50-0270.

Respectfully submitted,

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Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being filed with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office via EFS-Web on the date indicated below.

/Denise M. Wilson/
Signed

March 9, 2009
Date